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Tunisia

Grain and Feed

Report

2001

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Report Highlights:

Lack of rainfall in certain regions has resulted in a 19 percent reduction in planted area. Due to severe drought conditions affecting livestock in central and southern Tunisia, the GOT initiated in January 2001 a comprehensive relief program estimated at about \$ 10 million.

Includes PSD changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Rabat [MO1], TS

Production

Due to below average rainfall this year in central and southern Tunisia during seed bed preparation, total area planted in cereals in 2000/2001 declined about 13 percent, to about 1.30 million hectares, down from 1.5 million hectares in 1999/2000 and about 19 percent short of the planned figure of 1.6 million hectares. Though it is too early to assess cereal production at this time, if favorable climatic conditions prevail until harvest time (end of June - end of August 2001), OAA estimates total cereal production to reach only about 1.5 MMT (durum wheat 1.0 MMT, bread wheat 210,000 MT and barley 290,000 MT), approximately 10 percent short of the average.

Consumption and Trade

In order to meet its needs, Tunisia will need to import in 2001/2002 an estimated 880,000 MT of bread wheat, 550,000 MT of durum wheat and 250,000 MT of barley.

GOT Drought Assistance Program

More than 60 percent of the total sheep herd of 7 million head and 75 percent of the total goat herd of 1.5 million head are found in central and southern Tunisia. Lack of rainfall (up to 70% of the long term average in certain areas) is having an extremely negative impact on availability of grazing for sheep / goats / camels on pastures and drought conditions are now well set in. To feed their animals, farmers have to rely on hay and even straw, for which prices have more than quadrupled to 8 Tunisian dinars (\$6.15) and TD 5 (\$3.90), respectively, per 25-kg bale.

This situation has led the GOT to establish a drought relief program for the period Feb-May 2001 for producers in those regions of sheep, goats, and camels, for a total expected cost of about TD13 million (\$10 million). Principal measures include:

-- Temporary duty-free and VAT-free (normal VAT charges are 18 percent) imports of certain quantities of the following feeds:

-- alfalfa pellets	60,000 - 100,000 MT	(normal duty = 168 percent)
-- wheat bran	150,000 - 200,000 MT	(normal duty = 50 percent)
-- feed barley	300,000 MT	(normal duty = 84 percent)

-- Reduced prices of both imported and domestic barley to livestock farmers and to animal feed mills, at TD150 (\$ 108) per MT instead of TD190 (\$136) per MT;

-- Free vaccination of sheep and goat herds;

-- Treatment of 7000 MT of straw with ammonia and/or urea (to improve its nutritional value as feed);

-- Subsidized transport of forage to central and southern Tunisia; and

-- A subsidy to camel farmers of TD 110 (\$85)/month and per head for a period of four months to buy feed.